

liberty to try to weld together those ascertained facts by hypothesis. One of the most important matters with which he deals is the existence of mimicry of bird by bird, which is a much more widely spread phenomenon than many persons might be aware of. He arrives at the conclusion that this mimicry is essentially comparable to the colour-mimicry seen in so many animals; and, moreover, he finds a mimicry of—or rather, we should say, a protective resemblance to—the environment, which has also its analogue in the facts of animal coloration. The cry of the Robin reminds him of the pattering of raindrops; “the voices of Mallards, Flamingoes, Pelicans, and Herons resemble the croaking of frogs and toads,” and are therefore less likely to attract unwelcome attentions from birds of prey. We may also add that the note of the Bell-bird has the purposeless likeness to the tolling of a bell that the colours of many animals possess to objects which it cannot profit them to imitate. Nor is it certain that in these cases the resemblance of sound has been always produced by an actual effort on the part of the bird itself. The subject is a suggestive one, and is at least as worthy of consideration as the colour-phenomena with which it is sought to compare it.

L.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “to the Editors of ‘The Ibis’”:

SIRS,—On April 29th last a male of the White-banded Mocking-bird (*Mimus triurus*, Vieill.; Sel. & Huds. Arg. Orn. i. p. 8, pl. i.) was shot near here. It is the first example of this species I have met with in this district during 25 years.

I am,

Yours &c.,

ERNEST GIBSON.

Ajó (near Cape San Antonio),
Buenos Aires.

May 3rd, 1896.

SIRS,—It has been a doubtful point for some time among British ornithologists which of the Gull-tribe lays the beautiful eggs suffused with salmon-pink or reddish buff now to be seen in many of our collections. The late Mr. Seebohm attributed some examples taken at Vardö to the Glaucous Gull, while others have been supposed to belong to the Greater Black-back. During a short visit this year to some of the islands in the north of Norway, I had the pleasure of observing a Gull on one of these red eggs. Before my arrival two red eggs had been taken from a nest shown to me, and another nest had been made by the same pair of Gulls a few yards off, in which was a splendid specimen. I lay down behind some rocks about 60 yards away, and, after waiting 20 minutes, a Herring-Gull (*Larus argentatus*) walked quietly up to the nest and settled. I watched her through my glasses for some time, and am as sure of her identity as if I had shot and handled her; but as the owner of the island asked 80 kröner for permission to shoot the bird, his price was rather too high, so I hope my readers will accept the identification, without requiring her skin as proof.

I afterwards saw another egg in a nest 40 miles from the above, and was assured that it belonged to *L. argentatus*; but in this case I did not see the bird sitting. To show how scarce the red eggs are, I may say I went to a large group of islands (10 miles from that first mentioned), where an enormous number of Gulls breed. At the time of my visit 7320 eggs had already been sent to market, and the season was not nearly over. Half of these I estimated to be from *L. argentatus*, yet no red egg has ever been taken on this group of islands.

There is an even larger colony of *L. argentatus* at the north end of Fuglö, a well-known bird-rock, but the Lapps living there say they never find any red eggs.

So far as I have been able to interview the owners of the islands which produce red eggs, they have all assured me these eggs are laid by *L. argentatus*; but I should also state that a Norwegian friend—a good naturalist—has reliable information that a clutch of three red eggs has been taken from *L. marinus*.

I think that the late Mr. Seebohm was in error when he attributed these red eggs generally to *L. glaucus*; at any rate, I was told last year that this species had ceased to breed at Vardö for some time, yet red eggs are still obtained there.

I am,

Yours obediently,

HENRY J. PEARSON.

Bramcote, Notts.

June 28th, 1896.

SIRS,—In reply to your enquiry, I have in my collection eggs of *Scaphidurus ater* (= *Cassidix oryzivorus*) found in nests of *Cassicus persicus*. I have not yet published anything on this subject, but propose to put a notice of this new instance of parasitism in birds in the 'Journal für Ornithologie.'

The eggs that I possess were obtained near Pará, Brazil, by Mr. A. Schulz. This collector found amongst partially incubated eggs of *Cassicus persicus* some that were larger in size and different in shape, and observed that females of *Cassidix oryzivorus* entered the nests of the *Cassicus*. Having shot a female of *Cassidix* while flying into a nest of the *Cassicus*, he found in its oviduct a mature egg resembling the larger eggs met with in the nests of the *Cassicus*. This egg, broken, is now in my collection.

I am,

Yours &c.,

KUSCHEL

(Polizeirath).

Breslau,

August 12th, 1896.

[This discovery, if confirmed, is one of very great interest. We trust that our excellent correspondent at Pará, Dr. Goeldi, will turn his attention to the subject.—EDD.]

SIRS,—So far as I am aware, *Machærhamphus alcinus*, Westerm., has not yet been recorded from Sumatra. A pair of this rare bird of prey was shot, in April 1895, on the nest

at a height of 2000 feet up the Barisan mountains by Dr. Hagen, and one of the specimens is now before me. Besides Malacca, the species occurs in Borneo (P. Z. S. 1882, p. 688, and J. f. O. 1884, p. 216).

I am,

Yours &c.,

A. B. MEYER.

Dresden, August 8th, 1896.

Royal Zoological Museum.

SIRS,—MR. Chas. W. Andrews, in his paper on the "*Stereornithes*" in 'The Ibis,' January 1896, has shown: (1) that there exists no relationship between *Phororhacos* and *Gastornis*; (2) that the Ratitæ are in many respects more primitive, and not improbably were already sharply separated from the Carinatae when the Stercornithes arose; (3) that some, at least, of the Stercornithes may form a specialized offshoot of the stock which gave rise to the Neotropical Gruiformes; (4) that the Stercornithes seem to be a heterogeneous group. Since the publication of his paper the National Museum has acquired a number of specimens of these curious bird-remains, and the ventral surface of the skull of *Phororhacos* has been cleared of the stony matrix.

Mr. Andrews has courteously examined and discussed with me these specimens of Stercornithes, and we have conjointly come to the following conclusions:—

The skull, pelvis, and coracoid of *Phororhacos* indicate no relationship with the Ratitæ proper, nor with *Gastornis*, but point to affinities with the Gruiformes. *Pelecyornis* and *Liornis* are likely to stand near them.

Dryornis seems to belong to the Falconiformes, while *Mesembriornis*, so far as it is known, is perhaps a forerunner of true Rheidæ (cf. also Bronn's 'Thierreich,' Systemat. Theil, pp. 106 and 107).

Of *Brontornis* too little is known, and leg-bones alone afford no sufficient evidence for distinguishing between the Ratitæ and the flightless Carinatae, such, for instance, as *Aptornis*. The Santa-Cruz beds are no longer considered as of Lower Eocene, or even Oligocene, but of Miocene date.

As *Stereornis* is a synonym of *Phororhacos*, and has no affinities with the Eocene European *Gastornis*, the term *Stereornithes* can no longer be used in the sense in which I have employed it in Bronn's 'Thierreich.'

Anyhow, the *Stereornithes*, as originally proposed by Moreno and Mercerat, are, as a group, only of historical interest, and do not any longer convey a taxonomic meaning.

Yours &c.,

H. GADOW.

University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge.

August 22nd, 1896.

Breeding of Mycteria americana.—“On the banks of the Awarieru the ‘Negro Cop’ (*Mycteria americana*) breeds regularly. The nest, which is a rather bulky affair, consists of a bundle of sticks, these varying from half to one inch in circumference. It much resembles a gigantic Pigeon’s nest, and has but a very slight depression in the centre for the reception of the eggs. These nests are generally placed on the large limbs of the silk-cotton tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*), parallel to the limb, and, to avoid being blown down by the wind, are cemented by a thick layer of mud mixed with grass, which on drying becomes hard, and thus thoroughly secures the structure. The eggs, which are about the size of those of a Goose and of a dirty white colour, are laid in September, the usual number being four, but occasionally five are deposited. The young birds make their appearance about the end of October, and are then of the size of young Ducks and covered with greyish-white down. They are unable at first either to stand or squat up, but lie in the nest stretched at full length, with their heads on one side, as if lifeless. The beak at this stage is perfectly straight, showing not the slightest indication of the upward curve at the tip characteristic of the adult bird. When the nesting-tree is approached the mother bird stands upright in the nest as a signal to her mate, who is never far off. The latter hastens at once to her side, and strutting up and down, claps his mandibles together with a loud defiant click that can be heard

some distance away. The young birds grow rapidly, and in a few weeks are nearly the size of their parents; but their bodies are still too heavy to be supported by their long weak legs, and not until the first plumage is complete are they able to stand upright in the nest. The quantity of fish the young birds consume is astonishing, and all day long the parents are constantly employed supplying them with food. For some time after leaving the nest the birds are of a light drab colour, and they only assume the snow-white plumage of the adult after several moults."—C. A. LLOYD in 'Timehri,' n.s., ix. p. 223.

The Nomenclature of the Palamedeidae.—In preparing a new Catalogue of the Animals in the Zoological Society's Gardens, I have been compelled to decide by what names to call the two species of Crested Screamer (*Chauna*) from Argentina and Colombia respectively. These, like almost every one else, I have hitherto catalogued as *Chauna chavaria* and *C. derbiana*. But Count Salvadori has lately shown (Cat. B. xxvii. p. 4) that *Palamedea chavaria* of Linnæus was probably based on a Colombian specimen, and has proposed, therefore, to change the name of the northern species to *Chauna chavaria*. To this I cannot agree, because no one could then possibly tell which of the two species was designated by "*chavaria*"—a name that, after having been universally referred to one for the last hundred years, is now held to apply better to the other. I have therefore determined to retain "*derbiana*" as the specific name of the northern *Chauna*, and to follow Count Salvadori's lead and call the southern bird "*cristata*," rejecting the Linnean term "*chavaria*" altogether for uncertainty.—P. L. S.

Nation's 'Birds of Peru.'—Prof. Nation, of Lima, sends us a printed sheet and a coloured lithograph of the beautiful Trogon, *Pharomacrus auriceps*, which we understand to be a kind of pattern of what his long-projected work on the Birds of Peru will be, if he can carry out his plans. We trust that he may succeed in doing so; but the task is a heavy one,

as upwards of 1300 species belong to the rich avifauna of that country. Prof. Nation says that he has met with examples of 41 species of birds within the ancient walls of Lima.

New Australian Expedition.—We learn from the 'Victorian Naturalist' that an expedition, fitted out by Mr. Calvert for the purpose of completing the work of the Elder Expedition of 1891, has left Adelaide by sea for the north, and will start from Derby, on the north-west coast, and work in an easterly direction towards the Overland Telegraph line at Powell's Creek. As Mr. G. A. Kearland (late of the Horn Expedition) accompanies it as zoological collector, we may be sure that due attention will be paid to the class of Birds.

Buller's 'Birds of New Zealand.'—We are glad to learn that there is an increasing demand in the colony for the 'Birds of New Zealand,' some private copies having realized fancy prices at recent sales by auction. This speaks well for the growth of science in our remote dependency, and, as further evidence of this, the Legislature has voted a substantial sum towards the cost of a new 'Flora of New Zealand,' Sir Joseph Hooker's classic work having long been out of print. It is understood that the colonial authorities were most anxious to induce Sir Joseph to undertake a new edition of that work, but, owing to the great advance made in that department of science, it would have necessitated practically the re-writing of it; and, with the large demands upon his time in other directions, Sir Joseph was compelled to decline. He recommended that the task should be entrusted to a local botanist of repute, Professor Kirk, who has accordingly undertaken the work. Instead of bringing out a third edition of his 'Birds of New Zealand,' Sir Walter Buller has, wisely, we think, decided to produce a good handbook in octavo form, without coloured plates, but profusely illustrated with woodcuts. We have no doubt that such a volume would have a large sale, not only in the colony, but elsewhere.

The Collection of Birds at Göttingen.—The Natural-History Museum of the University of Göttingen contains a good general collection of birds formerly belonging to the late Major Kirchhoff, a well-known German ornithologist resident near Stuttgart. The specimens (about 2000 in number) are very well mounted and correctly named and arranged. I had the pleasure of inspecting them in June last under the kind guidance of Prof. Ehlers. There are good examples of *Baleniceps rex* from the White Nile (*Brehm*), of *Nestor productus* of Norfolk Island (now extinct), and of *Æchmophorus major* from Chili, in full plumage, and many other noteworthy specimens.—P. L. S.

The Collection of Eggs of the late Herr Wm. Hollandt.—According to a communication made by Dr. Wm. Blasius to the 'Verein für Naturwissenschaft' of Brunswick, the late Rechtsanwalt Wilhelm Hollandt has bequeathed his valuable collection of eggs to the Ducal Natural-History Museum of Brunswick. The collection, originally commenced by the acquisition of the Breitschneider collection of German eggs in 1879, is of a general character, and consists of upwards of 10,000 specimens, referred to 2710 species, and classified according to Gray's 'Hand-list.' There are full series of eggs of many of the rarer species, and only 13 families out of the 116 adopted in the 'Hand-list' are unrepresented.

Additions to the Bird-Collections of the British Museum.—The Parliamentary Report of the British Museum for 1896 contains the following list of the principal additions made to the Collection of Birds during the past year:—Two Little Auks (*Mergulus alle*), from Sandringham; presented by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Two nestlings of Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus bewicki*), from Kolguev Island; presented by Colonel Feilden. 217 birds and eggs from the Salvage Islands, Madeira, and Porto Santo, containing examples of many species of great interest; presented by the Hon. Cecil Baring and W. R. Ogilvie Grant, Esq. A collection of 924 birds, with nests and eggs, from the Province of Rio de

Janeiro; presented by Alexander Fry, Esq. 202 skins of South-American birds; presented by Osbert Salvin, Esq., F.R.S., and F. DuCane Godman, Esq., F.R.S. The last instalment of the Shelley Collection, numbering 3125 skins of African birds, including many types and species new to the collection; purchased. A specimen of a rare Petrel (*Estrelata incerta*), from the Cape Seas; presented by Thomas Parkin, Esq. The types of 24 new species of birds discovered during Dr. A. Donaldson Smith's expedition to Lake Rudolph; presented by Dr. Donaldson Smith. Eight specimens from Nassa, in Speke Gulf, Victoria Nyanza, obtained by the Rev. E. H. Hubbard, and containing the type of *Francolinus hubbardi*; purchased. The type specimen of *Tricholema ansorgii*, from Uganda; presented by Dr. Ansorge. Birds from Somaliland, collected by E. Lort Phillips, Esq., and containing 12 types and examples of 9 species previously unrepresented in the collection; purchased. 71 birds from Aden; presented by Colonel Yerbury. 21 specimens of birds from Sikhim, including the type of *Garrulax waddelli*; presented by Surgeon-Major L. A. Waddell. 4426 birds, forming the collection made by Colonel H. H. Godwin-Austen during his expeditions to the mountain-districts of Assam and Manipur, including specimens of many species unrepresented in the Museum and several types; purchased. A pair of Mrs. Hume's Pheasants (*Phasianus humie*), from the Ruby-Mines district in British Burma; presented by E. W. Oates, Esq. 82 birds from Kina Balu and the Sulu Archipelago, collected by A. H. Everett, Esq.; purchased. 22 birds from the islands of Luzon and Mindoro, including examples of four species new to the collection; obtained by A. H. Everett, Esq.; purchased. 224 birds from the Philippine Islands, including the type of a new genus and 35 types of new species; presented by the subscribers to the Whitehead Exploration Fund. Two males of a rare species of Bird of Paradise (*Parotia carolæ*) from N.W. New Guinea, new to the collection; purchased. Five specimens from Great Natuna Island, including specimens of two species new to the collection, obtained by Charles E.

Hose, Esq. ; purchased. 58 birds from New Zealand ; presented by Sir Samuel Scott, Bart. A series of 175 birds collected in the Hawaiian Islands, comprising examples of no less than 26 species new to the collection ; presented by the Joint Committee of the Royal Society and the British Association. 13 birds, including specimens of nine species new to the collection ; received in exchange from the Hon. Walter Rothschild. 109 Cuckoos' eggs and sets of the eggs of foster-parents ; purchased.

The total number of accessions to the Bird-collection in 1895 is given as 10,561.

As regards "arrangement and conservation," the following particulars are given :—

The collection of Skeletons of Birds has been removed from the studies in the basement to the north-west corridor, and has been temporarily arranged in systematic order on racks, preparatory to the final classification and arrangement in proper cabinets and boxes in juxtaposition with the collection of skins of the same class.

The collection of Ducks has been arranged and labelled in accordance with the Catalogue of Birds prepared by Count Salvadori ; the Petrels have been catalogued and arranged by Mr. Osbert Salvin, F.R.S. ; and the Gulls and Terns by Mr. Howard Saunders.

The Herons have also been catalogued and arranged, and the whole of the Plovers and Sandpipers catalogued and placed in glass-topped boxes.

A group illustrating the "showing-off" of the male of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) has been mounted ; the specimens have been presented by Abel Chapman, Esq.

A group illustrating the nesting-habits of the Pied Hornbill of South Africa has also been mounted, with a section of the tree in which the female is imprisoned by the male bird.

The Godwin-Austen Collection and the Shelley Collection have been registered and incorporated in the cabinet series of skins.

The newly-discovered Extinct Gigantic Bird of South Australia.—At the recent Meeting of the British Association at Liverpool a letter was read in Section D, addressed to Prof. Newton by Dr. Stirling of Adelaide, giving a preliminary account of the extinct gigantic bird of the *Diprotodon*-beds in South Australia, to the discovery of which we have alluded on former occasions (see ‘Ibis,’ 1894, p. 328, p. 577, and 1896, p. 430). Dr. Stirling says:—“The bird is, no doubt, more of an Emeu than anything else, though the head, unfortunately much broken, is very different; but, as regards the limb- (leg-) bones, it has the proportions of the thick-set Moas in the thigh-bone and tibia, and of the slender-legged Moas in the tarsus, with absurdly small toes for such a bulk. It is quite true that the outer toe has only four segments, as has been stated in ‘Nature’ (*cf.* ‘Nature,’ vol. 1. p. 206, 1894).” The paper describing this most interesting discovery by Dr. Stirling and Mr. Zietz has been read at a Meeting of the Royal Society of South Australia, and will shortly be in print. The name proposed for the new bird is *Genyornis newtoni*; *Genyornis* being in reference to the large size of the lower jaw, and the specific term to Prof. Newton, to whom the species is dedicated.

LI.—Obituary.

LORD LILFORD.—It was with the deepest regret that we announced in our last Part the sad loss which the British Ornithologists’ Union had sustained by the death of one who had been for many years its President, and an original member of the brotherhood formed in November 1858. At the time (June 18th) it was not possible to give any adequate sketch of our late President’s career, and even now we wish that the record of such a genial man, thorough naturalist, and good sportsman had fallen to more capable hands.

Thomas Lyttleton Powys, fourth Baron Lilford, born 18th March, 1833, was the son of the third peer by the Hon. Mary Elizabeth Fox, daughter of the third Lord Holland. Even when at Harrow he had begun to contribute to the ‘Zoo-